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ABSTRACT

The past, present, and future of oral interpretation are explored in this publication. Separate articles deplore a lack of growth and development in the area of oral interpretation, examine oral interpretation's current status, describe the ideal beginning oral interpretation course, point to the value of oral interpretation in the college curriculum, make predictions regarding the future of oral interpretation, and examine the future of oral interpretation in the light of its past history. An editor's response to the articles examines the confusion relating to definition of terms and philosophical first principles and then enumerates the benefits offered by oral interpretation. (GW)

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the issue: the future

It is not clear
Where we go from here,
Or, for that matter,
Who we're.

• Reed Whittemore

At the Interpretation Division meeting during the SCA Convention in Washington, a gentleman got up to question the future of interpretation. What could he tell students who planned to enter the field, he asked the session, about the practical matter of finding work? The issue has been in the open since Marie Hochmuth Nichols noted in the Fall, 1977, *Central States Speech Journal* that departments of speech communication have been dropping positions in interpretation. I personally have overheard departmental chairpersons wondering how long they could manage to keep their interpretation programs "now that other major universities have closed them." It seems that interpretation — traditionally the smallest area — and speech departments as a whole have taken much of the impact of the late economic crunch in colleges and universities.

Yet no one seems to claim that students do not like interpretation, or that they cannot fill interpretation courses. Perhaps interpretation suffers because it has stubbornly refused to produce marketable results in the quantitative studies done in the area. Perhaps, also, the area has never quite gotten over the identity crisis generated by the death of elocution. We can no longer point with pride and say, "There! That's a professional in my field. That's what we can prepare you to do with your life." The area has apparently sought a reflected glory/identity in a series of mirrors — psychology, communication, new criticism — but has been unable to liberate itself from the looking glass. It also occurs, sadly, that perhaps because of these crises interpretation has

simply been offered up to administrators as an economic appeasement that provokes the least number of political difficulties within and without a department. The unfortunate corollary — perhaps as yet unnoticed — is that speech communication itself has an identity crisis, and may find itself just as expendable as interpretation.

The leading figures of interpretation at the turn of the century were also the founders of the speech field, to a large extent. They were strong men and women, dynamic individuals, and yes, some even had a small streak of the charlatan in their character structures; but they were good at what they did, and they demanded respect for their field. The introspective focus of interpretation scholarship through the last fifty years seems inadequate to this turning point in our history. The irony is that our identity crisis itself has exhausted much of the energy that could provide interpretation an *active* definition. Interpretation apparently needs action in the tradition of the grand old masters; the question is what action.

The gentleman who rose to ask the question at the Convention never got an answer; it is *not* clear where we go from here. We ask our invited respondents and other readers, in 400 words or so, "where *do* we go from here?"

• Tony M. Lentz

paul campbell

Where *is* Oral Interpretation going? It is going nowhere at all, I'm afraid. Indeed, so far as I can tell, it has been going nowhere for at least fifty years. All of the concepts employed in the area today were present, explicitly or implicitly, as early as Curry. True, emphases change somewhat; there is, for instance, more attention paid to Readers' Theatre today. But if you look at, say, the latest (Fall '77) issue of *Readers Theatre News*, exactly the same concerns are worried over there that were dealt with five decades ago. Conceptually, there has been no growth, no development in the area.

So far as performance is concerned, there is nothing that is done in Interpretation that is not done better in Theatre. For performances in which nonessentials are whittled away, performances in which the minimum of theatrical structure is present, one turns to Theatre (Beckett's latest works, *That Time* and *Footfalls*, are as spare as anything on wishes to see). And for performance with full theatrical orchestration, one obviously turns to Theatre. Then, so far as the claim to the performance of nondramatic material is concerned, Theatre long ago took over that domain: the lives and persons of Queen Elizabeth, Mark Twain, Emily Dickenson, Harry Truman, and many, many others have been made into theatrical events using the materials of poetry, letters, essays, speeches, etc. With performance theory, the picture is even more bleak: it all comes from Theatre (which has, in turn, borrowed from still other areas); Interpretation has, to the best of my knowledge, contributed nothing to the theory of performance.

Where *should* Oral Interpretation go? As I have argued elsewhere, the proper direction appears to me to be toward that rich mixture of aesthetics and language-theory (or symbol-theory) with which almost no one seems to be concerned. And Interpretation would seem such a likely choice to explore those riches, if only it could break the stranglehold of orality. After all, it is Interpretation that deals with the notion of the *persona* and with the nature of metaphor and rhythm; and it treats these items as dynamic rather than static elements. There was a time when I was very hopeful, but no longer. I have seen no change. And it is not simply that there has been no change of the sort that seems to me appropriate, no movement in the direction I have described: I have seen no change, no movement at all.

• University of Kansas

richard haas

It is not clear
Where we go from here,

I imagine we all know the story about the farmer who, when asked for directions, said, "Ya can't get there from here." Poor soul, he doesn't know where he is in relation to the rest of the world, and since he doesn't know where he is, he remains unaware of who he is.

Or, for that matter,
Who we're.

I do not know one oral interpreter who is not in education. Since the passing of Chatauqua, interpretation has resided within academic walls where it has become a study of literature and performance embracing a humanizing force. Of that distinction I am proud. But the point I wish to make is that oral interpretation does not exist outside of school — as though it never graduated. Public performances are for college town/campus audiences. Festivals are educational activities attended by students and conducted by teachers. When interpretation does exist outside of school, such as performances by Hal Holbrook or the tv cast of "Anyone for Tennyson," it is not known or acknowledged as interpretation.

I do not know one critic of oral interpretation who is not an oral interpreter. Our theoreticians and critics, while frequently distinguished writers, speak from a position inside the field of participation. As an artistic form, oral interpretation has not attracted or developed a nationally recognized critic — the informed, yet non-participating, observer who metes artistic success, identifies aesthetic function, and suggests theoretical sophistication. Such parochialism would be untenable in the upper echelons of literature and theatre. While there is something vital missing from an art without a non-participating critic, I admit my suspicions of remarks about interpretation made from outside the field of involvement. Nevertheless, it is a fair assessment, if not an

assessment of some dubious pride, that the theoretical and critical writing about oral interpretation resembles a bibliography of artists writing about their art.

I do not know one oral interpreter who is acknowledged outside academia as an artist. We may recognize, at festivals or conventions, the artistic merits of this interpreter or that one, but there is little if any acclaim from the outside. I do not know of America's oral interpretive artist. I do not think we have one, at least we don't in the sense that painters have their Picassos and Shahns and actors have their Oliviers and Jacksons. It is a suspicious art which exists without models.

That's who, and I think where, "we're." If anyone wants directions from me, I, too would say, "Ya can't get there from here."

• University of Michigan

paul edwards

Redefining the Beginning Course

When I encounter comments expressing ignorance or indifference about the value of performing literature in the classroom, I'm forced to re-think my own goals as a teacher of a "first course" in interpretation. The beginning course in any program, it must be acknowledged, has the most points of contact with the rest of the college or university community. The enrollment is characteristically diverse, composed of students with a wide range of backgrounds, expectations, and performance problems. My own students have expected everything from a training program in rhetorical *pronuntiatio* to a speaking course for foreign language translators. The majority, dismayingly, show up not knowing *what* to expect. They have signed up for a "speech elective," and are somewhat embarassed and intimidated by the fact that their chief requirement to pass the course is getting up in front of a room full of strangers and performing poetry. Most of the students I've taught in the past two years know nothing about the fundamentals of literary criticism. A large number of them simply do not read imaginative literature for pleasure. Most have no intention of ever performing again after they leave the class. My principle frustration as a newcomer to teaching has been matching the needs of these, the majority of my students, with the smaller number who are either experienced performers (often drama majors or high school "contest winners") or English majors, each of these sub-groups having its own area of relevant "expertise." How should this beginning course be defined?

The problem of definition is compounded by the scope of the textbook frequently used in the beginning course (a problem due largely, I am told, to the demands of publishers who find a "handy compendium" of all relevant information easiest to sell). One long-time bestseller in the field covers everything from introductory metrics to practical advice on polishing delivery technique and assembling a public program. As excellent as this book is, its effect on a beginning student can be overwhelming. The study of prosody, of figurative language, of poetic and narrative forms, even of voice and movement, supplies the matter for five or six separate courses, and yet the teacher's impulse is often to present all this in summary fashion, unassimilable by the average student.

The beginning course should attempt fewer topics in greater depth. What interpretation does extremely well is orienting students to a way of reading literature. As many excellent essays and texts point out, the act of vocalizing and physicalizing a poem forces the student to adopt the speaker's point of view sympathetically and enact a background — a scene — for what Kenneth Burke calls the "symbolic action" of literature. The need for the beginning student to succeed in establishing this level of textual "meaning" has been recognized by major writers in the field from S.S. Curry to Don Geiger, and yet this sympathetic enactment is perhaps the most elusive thing for a beginning student, even one with acting or "contest" experience, to accomplish.

The teacher would do well to set this, and no more, as the chief "behavioral objective" for the beginning course. This is not to say that the study of literary forms or the training of voice and body are not important to the interpreter — far from it — but these are properly the province of advanced interpretation courses, and are generally available from existing courses in speech and English in most schools. The beginning interpretation course should be less interested in performance product than in performance process. In student evaluation, sincerity of effort in exploring a work's "symbolic act" should count far more than technical polish. Taking a cue from other teachers who have practiced this approach with success, I have had positive experiences working with students for a dialectical interaction of several performances of a single poem, the emphasis in class being not, "Who can do it best?" but rather, "What is learned about how we read a poem from viewing a variety of approaches to it?" If the beginning course succeeds in arousing the interest of readers, silent and oral, in the "symbolic act" of a poem or story, it is performing a very great service to students who seem increasingly to regard literature as something merely to "study," or worse, something to avoid.

Interpretation teachers must approach administrators with a fresh sense of definition for their basic offering. Those of us who, as students, have had the benefit of truly superb teachers in this field know the real merits of studying literature through performance. What we can offer the student is not training in drama, in prosody, in public speaking — it is, rather, an approach to literature, a *way* of reading. When interpretation's unique, relevant, and important contribution is presented to the student with competence and confidence, administrators and other colleagues cannot help but recognize the value of what we offer to the academic experience.

• University of Texas at Austin

lois cheney

Where Do We Go From Here?

This need not be asked nervously with one defensive eye on past glories and the other eye on present struggles for survival in a program-trimming, career-oriented atmosphere. In addition to producing eye strain such a posture forces unnecessarily defensive attitudes.

1. Across the country in academia there is a growing concern for bringing General Education up to date, moving from a body of courses an educated person "ought" to have toward a rigorous but more flexible development of skills, understandings, and values needed to lead satisfying and productive lives in a world that promises constant change. Oral Interpretation can find an integral role in such General Education development. Few areas of study integ ate such qualities as: dealing with issues and ideas in literature; relating them to personal and social concerns; developing skills of analysis; communicating beautifully and effectively through performance.

2. The career orientation of today's students has produced numerous studies that place communication skills of paramount importance in present and future marketability. Excellent oral interpretation calls for high quality written and oral analysis of literature and for oral performance with all of its informative, persuasive, and aesthetic objectives. It also achieves correlates of understanding one's self and adapting successfully to one's audiences.

3. As a performing art which develops skills needed by other performing arts, oral interpretation provides a service for actors, directors, media practitioners, etc.

4. The rich history, present activity and potential future for scholarship of all kinds (empirical, historical, descriptive, critical) places Oral Interpretation solidly in the ranks of teacher-scholars which from the backbone of the academic community under any conditions. With a future predicated on both disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs we have much to offer and gain.

These four views of Oral Interpretation do not negate or dilute what those of us who teach-perform-direct feel is a self-justifying role. They simply expose the Oral Interpretation activity and process in ways which address themselves to present day and future needs. The defensive postures taken by those academic areas which have been eyed by budget conscious administrators and accountability worshiping legislators have too often produced paranoia and self-conscious recitals of past importance. The question is not how to defend Oral Interpretation, but how can present day academia afford to fail to fully implement an area of study that speaks so directly to so many needs.

• Bowling Green State University

lee hudson &

beverly whitaker long

This is the final part of a paper given on the 1977 SCA Convention program, "Present Health and Future Prospects." Other areas of Speech Communication considered were Theatre by Oscar Brockett and Rhetoric by Herman Cohen.

"Future Prospects: Interpretation"

One viable index for the future of Interpretation lies in events of the past as well as the present. These, together with an attitude stimulated by conviction, lead us to the following predictive claims about future prospects for interpretation:

1. We will continue to emphasize performed literature, a performance that is recognizably a product or event and at the same time, ideally, a process in the long term development of an alliance between performer and text. We are just beginning to explore our shift in interest and terminology from "the text in performance" to "the performed text," indicating a renewed respect for the medium. We are asking: What is it? What are its elastic boundaries? How and in what ways is it inherently modifying the literary text? How is it "keyed" and "framed" and thus recognized as a unique speech activity?

2. We will develop a methodology for reporting discoveries about literature and persons as they, in conjunction, explore whatever the literary text reveals itself in performance. Such discoveries are commonly made; in the future they will be commonly articulated and reported. With a workable methodology, we will be better able to share with (and repay debts to) our colleagues in literary criticism, aesthetics, and other related fields.

3. In both classroom settings and in productions for an outside public, our work will demonstrate a fusion of sophistication in the intricate potentials of literature with a sensitivity to the theatricality inherent in any performance.

4. We will recognize our own stage of development in dealing with the psyche and personality of performers. While not assuming the role of therapists, we will loosen our ties with New Criticism, admitting that a person did perform, and respect the possibilities that her/his idiosyncratic behavior may evince. In short, we will achieve a heightened tolerance of the wide range of acceptable "transformations" that may result when literature and performers converge, performances governed neither by whim and chance nor by conventions and provincialism.

5. We will confidently realize our unique contribution for interested students, a contribution kin to but unlike that normally found in English, theatre, or other speech courses. Without compromising our basic commitment to performed literature, we will recognize that our relationship to other areas of departments of speech or theatre may influence the structure of our course offerings and the nature of our extraclass performing activities, and that our departmental role will, in part, be shaped by a particular program and a specific departmental philosophy.

6. The nature and effect of performance will be the subject of constant check-ups — both through reasoned intuition and controlled investigation. The quantitative studies presuppose a continued search for adequate measurement devices.

7. We will strengthen and develop our alliances with organizations such as NCTE, MLA, ATA, and the American Society for Aesthetics, all of whose shared concerns are obvious. Also, individuals who have informed and energetic interests in related fields but whose main interest is interpretation will initiate professional relationships with organizations such as those devoted to the study of folklore, psychology, and film.

8. While continuing a divisional affiliation with the SCA, members of the Interpretation Division will realize that service to and from the national organization is necessary for a mutually beneficial relationship. As long as humanistic endeavors are a central concern of SCA, ID will continue to serve the organization.

9. We will become a more cohesive — and formidable — community of individuals (scholars, teachers, directors). The 1976 SCA Summer Conference once again confirmed the diversity and vitality of this group. Paradoxically, it also confirmed the insularity of many individual participants' efforts and opportunities for growth. For researchers, it emphasized the need for other, and perhaps more specialized, conferences or post-doctoral seminars that would deal with very specific kinds and subjects of research. For teachers, more workshops, especially at state and regional conventions, may stimulate the exchange of ideas about instructional strategies in interpretation.

10. At some future time, the numerous festivals around the

country will attain the degree of sophistication and central organization that now characterizes the American College Theatre Festival, thus permitting directors and students to grow by participating in outstanding work at state, regional, or national levels.

11. The enthusiastic response to *Oral English, Issues in Interpretation, Interpretation Newsletter,* and *Readers Theatre News* suggests an interest that will generate the support necessary for a major interpretation journal.

12. The bibliographies now assembled indicate a serious concern about research tools. With these recently published aids, we will avoid tremendous wastes of time that researchers inevitably meet as well as the frequent false claim that something is "new."

13. Finally, we will enjoy an increased pride in Interpretation with the initial and continuing publications about the history of our area. The first comprehensive volume, soon to be launched, is sure to anticipate others, thus giving us the kind of stability (and restlessness) in the present — and directions for the future — that only a secure knowledge of the past can provide.

• University of Texas at Austin and
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

howard r. martin

Patrick Henry is said to have remarked that he knew no way of judging the future but by the past. His feet were to be guided, he insisted, by the lamp of experience. This seems appropriate advice for those concerned about the future of academic oral interpretation. Not only does the performance of literature have a long and distinguished history but there are signs that recent theory and practice have been taking the field in directions that may not serve it well in the years to come.

Historically speaking, oral interpretation must be defined as a performing art. Its raisin d'etre is the performance of literature — both oral and written — and its roots lie in the relatively unselfconscious orality of pre-literate cultures such as those of the Homeric singer, the Anglo-Saxon scop, the South Slavic epic reciter, the tribal shaman, and the primitive folk-poet. From the academic standpoint, it is the stury of the oral tradition in which the performer and the performance-event are primary and the oral-aural aesthetic prevails.

In the academic context the term "oral interpretation" has come in recent years to mean something different from that. Viewed as an approach to literature, for example, it has become in some instances a critical tool for examining certain values in the text. Performance is unwittingly seen as secondary to the literary construct. The text is what ultimately matters; the performance is a method for coming closer to it. There is, of course, much to be said for a study of this kind within the liberal arts curriculum, perhaps under the umbrella of literary studies, and perhaps under the guidance of trained oral interpreters. Nevertheless, one must insist that this is not oral interpretation as understood from the viewpoint of its history. It is too "literary" and intellectualized. It runs full force into some of the dangers described so well by Susan Sontag in her essay "Against Interpretation": "In a culture whose classic dilemma is the hypertrophy of the intellect at the expense of energy and sensual capability, interpretation is the revenge of intellect upon art..." The oral performance of literature cannot be thought of in such terms. Its task is the recovery of the senses and the development of whole powers of intuition. In short, its objectives are artistic. Nothing short of that will do. Interpreters,

therefore, will do well to recover and reatin the vitality of the traditions of which they are a par and to place their priorities, both scholarly and pegagogical, on the events of performance.

How does a performance-oriented oral interpretation program justify its presence in the community of scholars? The first answer is that it does so by offering to that community artistic contributions of unquestioned merit. A recent performance of the poetry and drama of W.B. Yeats at the University of Michigan has generated so much interest that it has developed into an ambitious multi-disciplinary Yeats Festival with performers, scholars, critics, and theatre administrators from all over the country involved. University administrators place their priorities where the momentum is, and there is no theoretical reason why oral interpretation programs should not attract approving attention.

The second answer is that scholarly research in the field of interpretation should be focused on the study of the art form itself: its history. philosophy, and aesthetics; its kinesic, linguistic, and paralinguistic variables; its styles and genres, its anthropology and sociology, and its pedagogy. If scholars were to concentrate more specifically on the events of performance themselves, they would help define oral interpretation as a legitimate field of academic enquiry distinct from literature and literary criticism.

Such concerns would bring about a re-evaluation of priorities in the teaching of oral interpreters. For one thing, there might be a shift towards theatre in the curriculum, so that performers were trained as artists in such areas as voice, speech, movement, and mime. While insisting on the difference between classic oral interpretation and acting, we must for the sake of the future be cautious not to exaggerate them. After all, acting is an "interpretive" art in the sense of deriving from a clear understanding of previous givens (e.g. texts, scenarios, characters), and conversely, interpretation is a dramatic art involving empathy, transformation, characterization, and the like. Moreover, some of the best modern theatre (*For Colored Girls*, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*) is based on narrative and documentary principles, and many of the best professional oral interpreters (Charles Laughton, Frank Pettingell, Hal Holbrook) are in the first instance actors. There is much, I believe, for theatre artists to learn from oral interpreters and vice versa. As they look to the future they must find new ways to cooperate in the production of works of art.

Does oral interpretation have a future? I believe it does. In the year 2000, people will still be telling stories, reading poems, and creating lyric and narrative theatre. The question is whether academic interpretation will be flexible and creative enough to be there with it.

• University of Iowa

editor's response:

Arriving at this third and final version of the editor's response has been a harrowing process. My beliefs and feelings about the area have been shaped by Martha Nell Hardy's first principle: Interpretation can and will save the world. The irony of entering that field to find it littered like a battleground provokes cognitive dissonance of the first magnitude. One doesn't know whether to fight or to bury the dead.

The first version of this statement demonstrated that same dissonance with regard to the other responses. Each frustrated, alarmed or appealed in differing directions, and it has been impossible to answer those conflicting impulses in such brief space. It seems more valuable to respond in a tangential fashion, by examining the military situation and cleaning the perceived weapons at hand.

The loss of the numerous academic positions, the loss of Ph.D. programs, rumblings of trouble to come at other institutions, numbers of interpreters leaving the field or planning retirement, continuing declines in overall college enrollment, continuing increases in educational costs, and the resulting pressures on hiring and advancement — all these have combined to make the future appear grim. Interpretation appears to be a performance art which has chosen, for reasons of survival, to exist within an academic environment. The scholarship of the area has often chosen to blend in with the surrounding countryside, adopting the characteristics of other disciplines. These adaptations have changed to match the hiding places which offer the best cover. The inevitable results have included both the apologetic attitude which Cheney rightly deplores, and the deeply felt uncertainty which Edwards explores as to whether Interpretation should instruct in "performance" at all. While Interpretation has been hiding in the classroom, others have assumed our performative pursuits, our linguistic efforts, and our expertise in kinesics (née elocution).

A large part of our confusion relates to definition of terms and philosophical first principles. Some but not all of us apparently assume, for example, that Interpretation is something that exists only in a classroom, especially when we discuss the ultimate values of the area. When we untangle the potential practical and

philosophical situation of Interpretation we find sound arguments for the value of the field.

Interpretation offers many practical benefits to a college campus. On a personal level the individual skills and awareness which Interpretation offers are still strong arguments in its favor. Recent concern with the oral traditions of the past suggest that the oral tradition of the present could bear fruitful examination. There is growing interest, for example, in modern oral poetry and in poetry readings. Active interpreters theatre groups clearly add to the cultural atmosphere, and may serve as instructional tools for other disciplines if such inter-disciplinary cooperation can be achieved. There is clear evidence that interpreters theatre groups provide excellent public relations for college institutions, while serving extension programs as a form of continuing literary education for the public. As Charlotte Lee noted in *Readers Theatre News*, we don't wish to be known as "cheap theatre," but it doesn't hurt to mention that Interpretation offers a high return on the administrative dollar. The dynamic interpreters theatre program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to be specific, was one of the main reasons that institution *added* a new position this year at the associate professor level, demonstrating the mutual benefits of performance activism. Recent work on intonation and kinesics has demonstrated that our elocutionary traditions are not without merit. Dr. Howard R. Martin's work on performance intonation, for example, has given us a descriptive scientific method for the study of vocal meaning in performance. The kinesics of interpretive performance demonstrates just as forcefully the lessons that can be learned in role-playing or theatre games. Interpretation can thus clarify the ways in which we mean for actors, people who read for personal enjoyment, literary scholars, and businessmen who need clarity of interpersonal perception.

On philosophical grounds Interpretation stands in the heart of the great humanistic tradition of liberal education. The area has value for the individual performer or audience member as a "way of knowing" or a "communion" with literature; thus the area has value for the culture as a whole by providing this experience to the public. In the midst of the current rush toward technical job-getting skills, we must remember the warnings of German historian Friedrich Meinecke in *The German Catastrophe*. Hitler was able to come to power, he alleged, because a highly specialized education left emptiness in the lives of the growing technological society. After quietly working in their specialties for years, he wrote, men awoke desperately in the middle of their lives, craving something meaningful, groping rashly at simplistic and fashionable ideas to give their lives purpose. The shallowness

of much television, films, and popular literature does not address this need, and we see many of the symptoms around us. Interpretation provides the intimacy of knowing that can satisfy such a deep yearning for a means of understanding life.

The area also stimulates the reinforcement of one of the basic affirmative characteristics of human cultural intelligence, that of reaching beyond the individual mentality to understand a person or problem from outside our experience. Piaget demonstrates that a major step in childhood development is the day when the child can imagine itself in another place to describe, for example, what a doll sees from its position on a model countryside. Perhaps this has been the ultimate civilizing force behind the appeal of Christianity, the chailenge for men and women to "grow up" by placing themselves in each other's existence for a time. If the race ever eliminates war and the other plagues of the humar spirit, surely it will be done in the name of love and understanding by individuals who can imagine themselves in the lives of other human beings. One often hears the sentiment expressed that people learn by doing. Interpretation offers a way for the technologically numbed spirit to learn the experiences of others by *doing* them, and a method for bringing the person who reads and lives as though deaf and blind to an understanding of the colors and sounds imprisoned beyond the letter. This is the promise and the pain of our area, a field which demands so little and offers so much.

As to where we go from here, and the continuing clamor for a definition of Interpretation, we can respond only by doing. I begin class each semester with two of my favorite performances, reading to students as though each word would be my last chance to mean anything to another human being. They always understand what interpretation is, even when they ask for clarifying ways to explain it. The term "oral interpretation" has become a symbol without a referent for others, an abstraction because they have never experienced it. If Interpretation as a performing art continues to hide its lamp under a basket, it may soon awaken in the ash-heap, useless in a world where the people have slowly gone blind in darkness.

•Tony M. Lentz

verso: silent reader

This series of readers is definitely designed to provide working material for the development of efficient "silent reading." It is not planned to compete with the many excellent series of readers now available. The authors believe that it will efficiently supplement the well-nigh universal school practice of conducting all reading lessons aloud.

Oral reading is not sufficient...

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